

LSE Research Laboratory Data Security Standards: Secondary Data

Description: The London School of Economics Research Laboratory standards for access and use of secondary data for research.

Introduction

1. The availability of secondary data resources underpins the LSE Research Laboratory's (RLAB) research programme. Therefore, the security, confidentiality and good management of data resources is key to the success of the RLAB. Failure to secure data increases the risk of legal sanctions and reputational loss from which it may be difficult to recover.

Purpose

2. This document outlines the standards implemented by the LSE Research Laboratory (RLAB) to support the secure storage and use of research data.
3. This document also defines roles and responsibilities that relate to the implementation of these standards.

Scope

4. These standards are applicable to, and will be communicated to, all members of the RLAB including (but not restricted to) staff, students, visitors and associates.
5. For the purposes of this document the RLAB includes the following research centres: CASE, CVER, CEP, SERC and STICERD.
6. Research data in this context is defined as observational, experimental, simulated, derived or compiled resources that a researcher is accessing for the purposes of their research (e.g. survey data, administrative data, images, video footage, computer files etc).

7. The data covered by these standards are anonymised data, which offer little possibility for the user to disclose sensitive information (even in combination with other sources). These datasets may be available via downloads from the web via click through licenses.
8. These standards do not cover access to sensitive or personal data, or data that requires any kind of contractual guarantee from the LSE or RLAB. Access to these data types is covered in *RLAB Sensitive Data Security Standard*.
9. These standards do not cover primary data resources created by researchers.

Definitions

10. Data contract/license refers to a formal agreement entered into by a member of the RLAB in return for access to research data. As outlined above, this includes (but is not restricted to) click through licenses as well as agreements that must be signed in hard copy.
11. Data Resources refers to all IT and contractual resources provided to researchers to store, safeguard, and analyse their data, as well as the data themselves.
12. Members refers to all staff, students, associates, visitors and others working with RLAB resources.
13. RLAB domain refers to dedicated subnets of the LSE IT network on which RLAB servers, PCs, and users are managed. This enables RLAB IT staff to have increased control over IT security than would be possible as part of the LSE domain.

Standards

14. Access to the RLAB IT facilities is only available to registered RLAB members via user specific, password protected accounts controlled by the IT Manager. These accounts abide by the *LSE Password Policy* which enforces high complexity and regular changes of password.
15. In order to register as a data user and access the RLAB network, all staff, students, associates and visitors must complete the *RLAB Data Security Form* prior to accessing or storing any data within the RLAB domain.

16. Data that are contractually restricted to specific programmes, projects, or individuals will be accessed only by members covered by the contract.
17. RLAB members must not copy or pass data to any unlicensed person.
18. Visitors to the RLAB may be able to access data resources depending on the conditions of their data license and following consultation with a centre manager.
19. Researchers from other institutions who do not have employment/associate /visitor status with RLAB cannot access any RLAB IT/data resources even if they are involved in a collaborative project with RLAB members.
20. On leaving the RLAB members may only remove data that is licensed to them at an individual level.
21. The RLAB conforms to the *Conditions of Use of IT Facilities at the LSE*, the *LSE Information Security Policy* and the *LSE Information Classification Standard*.

Licensing

22. RLAB members are responsible for ensuring that they hold valid, up to date licenses for all data resources they are accessing.
23. RLAB members will at all times abide by any license or contractual conditions associated with their access and analysis of research data.
24. Members must be aware at all times that data licenses are legal documents and any breach of the terms of the document may lead to sanctions being taken, by both the LSE and the data provider.

Storage

25. As standard all data resources should be stored on secure networked spaces (J: for CEP and SERC, Z: for STICERD and CASE) or on the RLAB remote desktop servers.
26. Data should only be stored on a member's PC hard drive for analysis purposes, and only where such local storage does not compromise data security. Data should be removed to a network drive as soon as the analysis is complete.
27. It is recommended that to reduce the risk of data loss no data should be stored on portable storage (eg. USB hard drives or memory sticks). Where there is genuine

need to store data on a portable device, members should consider using a drive that has either software or hardware encryption. It is advisable to store these devices in a secure location e.g. in locked desk drawer.

Security

28. Access to the RLAB is via swipe card only and is restricted to members.
29. All offices have locks and IT offices have additional chub locks which are not available on the RLAB master key.
30. All RLAB servers are located in a secure server room. The server room is accessed via two locked doors within the swipe card restricted area. Keys are held only by the IT managers and the departmental managers.
31. All data are stored within password protected folders that can be accessed only by licensed users (and IT staff)
32. PCs have a screen lock implemented automatically after 12 minutes. This lock can only be disabled by the active user (or a member of the IT team).
33. All computer hard drives are reformatted at the end of their usage period.
 - a. Usage periods will be defined as follows: for data servers this will be on decommissioning of the server; for member PCs this will be when the member leaves or the PC is decommissioned.
34. Access permissions for user network spaces are removed on the member leaving the RLAB.

Roles and Responsibilities

35. Members of the RLAB are responsible for adhering to any license/contractual conditions associated with their data access.
36. Any data contract which requires an institutional guarantee must be lodged with the centre manager and signed by the Director of the LSE Research Division. Any data contracts signed by other members of staff (e.g. heads of department, PhD supervisors, project principal investigators) on behalf of the LSE/RLAB will not be legally valid.

37. The centre managers will provide support for data purchase, and contractual and licensing issues.

38. Data support, including advice on data resources available within the LSE, will be provided by the LSE Library (datalibrary@lse.ac.uk).

Reporting

39. Any actual or suspected breach of data security must be immediately reported to the RLAB Manager who will take appropriate action and inform relevant authorities.

Disciplinary procedures

40. Failure to comply with these standards or its subsidiary regulations may result in disciplinary action in accordance with procedures outlined in the *Conditions of Use of IT Facilities at the LSE*. Disciplinary action may include loss of RLAB Membership and access to RLAB facilities. Non-compliance with data access contracts may also lead to data providers imposing sanctions including criminal charges and loss of ESRC funding.

Reference documents

41. RLAB Sensitive Data Security Standard

http://rlab.lse.ac.uk/itsupport/downloads/2017/LSE_Research_Laboratory_Data_Security_Standards.pdf

42. RLAB Data Security Standard

http://rlab.lse.ac.uk/itsupport/downloads/2017/LSE_Research_Laboratory_Security_Standards_for_Sensitive_Data.pdf

43. RLAB Data Security Form

http://rlab.lse.ac.uk/itsupport/downloads/2017/LSE_Research_Laboratory_dataform.pdf

44. RLAB Sensitive Data Security Form

http://rlab.lse.ac.uk/itsupport/downloads/2017/LSE_Research_Laboratory_sensitiveform.pdf

45. RLAB Remote Working Guidelines

http://rlab.lse.ac.uk/itsupport/downloads/2017/LSE_Research_Laboratory_Remote_Working_guidelines.pdf

46. Conditions of Use of IT Facilities at the LSE

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/IMT/about/policies/condits.aspx>

47. LSE Information Security Policy

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/infSecPol.pdf>

48. LSE IT Services Password Policy

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/IMT/about/policies/documents/passwords.pdf>

49. LSE Information Classification Standard

<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/policies/pdfs/school/infSecStalT.pdf>

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Version History

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1.04	Finalised by Nic Warner	10/02/2017